

Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, MSW
Vice President, Public Policy, Advocacy and Organizing
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc.

In support of raised House Bill 6859 *An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling*
and Senate Bill 1177 *An Act Concerning One Fair Wage*
March 9, 2023

Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and honorable members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Vice President, Public Policy, Advocacy and Organizing at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in strong support of raised House Bill 6859 *An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling* and Senate Bill 1177 *An Act Concerning One Fair Wage*. As the state's largest provider of family planning and sexual and reproductive health care to over 50,000 patients at 14 health centers across the state, Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable health care as a basic human right as well as the ability and resources to make their own health care decisions with dignity — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or immigration status.

Planned Parenthood believes that every individual has the right to determine their own reproductive destiny and understands that right is directly linked to the conditions in their communities. That includes the right to plan their families, live in safe and healthy communities, and to have full control of their body, life, and future. As advocates for reproductive freedom, we must consider all aspects of a person's life including those that affect their economic stability. Every person deserves the economic security to care for themselves and their family with dignity. We know firsthand, through patients we see in our health centers, the juggling act people have to play each month to pay their bills, care for their families, and meet their basic needs.

Many working families in our state struggle with fluctuating incomes caused by unstable work hours that change from week to week. Working people in front-line service jobs, who are more likely to be women and people of color, are especially vulnerable to harmful scheduling practices that strain families. Unpredictable and volatile work schedules in low-wage jobs can make it impossible for working women to make ends meet and to care for their families. When parents and caregivers' incomes are in flux, families struggle to meet basic expenses and to arrange childcare, medical appointments or family meals. Women are disproportionately affected by unstable, unpredictable work schedules because women not only hold the majority of low-wage jobs but also still shoulder the majority of caregiving responsibilities. Women of color especially bear the brunt of challenging scheduling practices, as they are overrepresented both in the low-wage workforce and among single mothers working to support their families.ⁱ

Unpredictable work schedules directly and indirectly contribute to a host of health and well-being impacts. It is disruptive to family life because workers cannot spend quality time with their family due to unpredictable schedules. Research indicates that unpredictable schedules are associated with stress, depression, anxiety, disrupted sleep, food insecurity, and numerous physical health problems, including high blood pressure.ⁱⁱ

H.B. 6859 gives workers the stability they need, ensuring that more than 140,000 retail, food service, long-term care, and hotel workers have more predictable schedules and paychecks. The bill will give part-time employees the opportunity to work more hours, requiring employers to offer extra shifts to current workers before hiring additional staff.

A fair minimum wage ensures that working people can support themselves and their families, no matter who they are or what job they hold. Research indicates that the subminimum wage for tipped workers perpetuates racial and gender inequities, and results in worse economic outcomes for tipped workers. Forcing tipped workers to rely

on tips for their wages creates tremendous instability in income flows, making it more difficult to budget or absorb financial shocks.ⁱⁱⁱ Women, who represent over two-thirds of tipped workers nationally, are hit especially hard by this poverty-level wage, which leaves them vulnerable to both economic insecurity and sexual harassment.^{iv} There are approximately 70,000 tipped workers in Connecticut, 70% of whom are women. 38% are workers of color. Eliminating the subminimum wage will help advance racial and gender equity and we urge your support of S.B. 1177.

Our economy and public health suffer when workers cannot predict their hours or pay from day to day, make time for schooling or childcare, secure a second job, or qualify for promotions to full-time employment. We must move forward in our state and pass policies to ensure a more equitable and just society. This is an urgent racial, reproductive, and gender justice issue. We must do more to protect all workers from harmful practices that impact their ability to provide for themselves and their families. That is why we urge you to support H.B. 6859 and S.B. 1177 to protect the basic rights of Connecticut workers and will help guarantee and promote the health and economic security of all Connecticut residents and allow families to thrive instead of struggling to survive. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ National Women's Law Center <https://nwlc.org/resources/nwlc-testimony-impact-irregular-work-schedules/>

ⁱⁱ Scheduling Away Our Health: How Unpredictable Work Hours Affect Health and Well-being https://humanimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Scheduling-Away-Our-Health_rev3.pdf#:~:text=Our%20findings%20indicate%20that%20unpredictable%20work%20schedules%20directly,to%20a%20host%20of%20health%20and%20well-being%20impacts.

ⁱⁱⁱ Seven facts about tipped workers and the tipped minimum wage <https://www.epi.org/blog/seven-facts-about-tipped-workers-and-the-tipped-minimum-wage/>

^{iv} One Fair Wage: Women Fare Better in States with Equal Treatment for Tipped Workers https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/OFW-Factsheet-2021_v2.pdf#:~:text=One%20Fair%20Wage%20states%20require%20employers%20to%20pay,gap%20in%20states%20that%20follow%20the%20federal%20standard.